



PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

NEWSLETTER 13 / FEBRUARY 1997

1 - MATOBO NATIONAL PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Your Society was represented at a five-hour planning meeting arranged by the Ministry of Tourism and chaired by Mr M Ndlovu, Chairman of the Matobo Committee, at which the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry was present, along with the local National Parks hierarchy, and representatives of the tourism industry, National Museums, and other conservation bodies. The meeting was held to outline the Ministry's future direction as far as National Parks is concerned, and to draw up a mission statement and strategic plan for the Matobo NP. To this end, small workgroups were set up to examine specific topics, and these reported back at the end of the session. If adopted, this could see considerable devolution of power to a local Matobo National Park management team which would be a positive development. We will keep you posted on progress

2 - NANGO MEMBERSHIP CONFIRMED

After a four-year effort to gain membership with the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations, membership was finally confirmed on 21 January 1997.

3 - ROCK ART BROCHURE

These have been distributed, and positive reports have been received. Following an enquiry from one visitor, who advised that the Site Museum at Nsvatuke contradicted our brochure, we advise that our brochure refers to the Matobo Rock Art only (at 20,000 years of age) whilst the Site Museum refers to rock art in general, at 60,000 years of age.

The committee is contemplating the preparation of additional brochures that will address other matters of importance within the Matobo Hills. Any companies that may wish to sponsor such an exercise should write to the Society. Approximately \$6,500 secures 10,000 copies, and distribution will be along the same lines as the Rock Art Brochure.

4 - LITTER BAGS TO BE INTRODUCED

Procon Sales have offered to produce litter bags for distribution to visitors to the National Park. It is hoped that this exercise will encourage visitors to collect their litter, and dispose of it into official bins. The bags will carry the Procon logo and advertising on one side, and the MCS logo and message on the other. The bags should become available in the next few months, so watch the press for further information.

5 - PROTECTION FOR THE OSMUNDO REGALIS FERN

Sullivans Engineering have offered to assist with the construction of a small foot bridge over the Osmundo regalidis ferns, that occur along the Inange cave walk, from Toghwana Dam. It is planned to complete the exercise before the winter months.

6 - MTSHABEZI DAM NEWS

The dam is now over 71 % full, with 5m to go before it spills. Obviously that is still a lot of water to collect, but if good rains persist it is possible that it may spill this year. The lake itself is looking quite spectacular - living up to all the expectations that we had, whilst all the plants that we removed in 1994 are doing well.

7 - NEXT EVENT

WHERE	Social Trip to Mtshabezi Dam
WHEN	Sunday 13 April
MEET	at Ascot Service Station 9:00am for 9: 15am departure
WHO	All members and friends
WHAT	Bring own lunch, deck chairs, drinks. Braai available. Don't forget your hat!
WHY	Revisit our earlier conservation site, see the new lake and to meet one another.

We urge all members to make a special effort to attend this outing, and friends are more than welcome. The Chairman, Mr Roy Stephens will discuss the flora of the area, whilst we also hope to be updated on the proposed Mtshabezi Valley Development plan, and related tourist venture. The roads are fairly good, and a saloon car will have no difficulty in getting out to the dam.

8 - REPORT BACK

Our field trip to Lumane Valley on 26 January 1997 was successfully held, but it would have been more encouraging had there been some new faces amongst the group. An advance trip on the 25th January laid down the ground work, and the main body travelled out the next day in the company of Councillor Ndlovu (URDC), the area councillor, and Mr N Murevadimwa, of the Dept. of Natural Resources. Around thirty local people assisted with the exercise, in which just under 100 trees, (from about 20 species) were planted, along the river bank. The cool wet weather that has prevailed since then will have helped the saplings to get established, and so it is felt that they should be a high success rate. The area is to be fenced, with the considerable assistance of National Fencing, and we will keep you advised as to the progress of the exercise. A special thank – you is extended to all those who collected and contributed the young trees.

Lunch was held at the Lumane Falls, and the Falls themselves were visited in the afternoon. The inevitable rain shower did little to dampen spirits – and certainly raised the level of the water coming over the falls, which were quite spectacular. Evidence of deforestation in the vicinity of the falls is being acted upon.

9 - PARKS FEES

No sooner was the ink dry on our last newsletter than Government changed the fee structure. The damage caused to our tourist sector won't easily be undone, whilst it is simply heart-breaking to see the once proud Department of National Parks in such chaos. However not all fees have been adjusted, and some areas of conflict remain. It goes without saying that the dual fee issue (Parks vs Museums) has received no attention.

For your information some of the revised fees, which started 1 Jan 1997, are listed ;

Entry	\$10,00 p/p local visitor	
	US\$5,00 p/p foreign visitor (\$50 p/p)	
Car	\$10,00 per sedan / station wagon (caravan \$50, 00, trailer \$25)	
	\$20,00 per light truck or 4 x 4	
Firewood	\$40,00 per bundle	
Camp site	\$30,00 p/p per day	Picnic site \$25,00 p/p per day

10 - APPEAL - LANTANA CAMARA

The society is attempting to collate information on the eradication of Lantana camara which is a major problem in the eastern Matopos. If you have any advice, or methods to eliminate this scourge, please write in to the Society.



11 - DRIVE FOR NEW MEMBERS

New members are being sought, and all existing members are urged to help recruit new members. Come along to the Mtshabezi outing.